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ABSTRACT

Rapid population growth in rural areas has confronted rural communities and particularly rural educational systems with a number of problems. Sudden, large increases in students crowd school facilities and strain budgets. The different values, attitudes, and orientations toward education of the newcomers act as a catalyst for changes and can cause conflict within the community. In 1978 the U.S. Department of Agriculture studied two communities confronted by such drastic, rapid population growth. In both cases the educational system was afflicted with student overload and crowded facilities. The town of "Reliance" had not experienced economic growth commensurate with its population boom and voters there were unwilling to bear increased taxation for schools. Unsatisfactory stop-gap solutions to overcrowding led to even greater dissatisfaction and negative attitudes among community members. The mining boom town of "Appaloosa" did have a strong economic base and townspeople there worked together to secure improved facilities, more teachers, and stronger school programs. The two community case studies include discussion of general community settings, the educational systems as impacted by rapid growth, school-community relations, and ways school districts and communities coped with the impacts. (Author/DS)

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THE EDUCATIONAL EFFECTS OF RAPID RURAL POPULATION GROWTH

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THE EDUCATIONAL EFFECTS OF RAPID RURAL POPULATION GROWTH 1/

INTRODUCTION

The seventies marks the beginning of "The Great Population Turnaround in America" (27: p. 1). For the first time in many decades, nonmetro areas in the U.S. experienced a greater growth in population than metro areas (2,3,4,6). During 1970-1977, for example, population of nonmetro areas grew by 9.3 percent compared with 5.3 percent for metro areas (29).

Migration is a major factor contributing to the turnaround with large numbers of people moving away from the cities (13). For the period 1970 to 1975, the population in nonmetro America increased by 3.6 million with 51 percent (1.8 million) due to net migration and the remainder (1.7 million) attributed to natural increase (balance of births and deaths). In contrast, the same areas grew during the 1960's by only 2.3 million in ten years, all due to natural increase since 3.0 million net outmigration occurred. Hence, the use of the term, turnaround, here emphasizes increased migration into nonmetro 2/ areas.

Migration and Education

The trend of heavy outmigration from rural areas dominating the years between 1940-1970 (6) impacted on both general educational levels and the system of education in rural places. Migration selectivity of younger, better educated rural people worked to lower educational attainment of the remaining population (9). At the same time, attempts to conform rural

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1/ Portions of this paper include information previously reported by the authors (25,26), and the educational scenarios are excerpted from IMPACTS OF THE RURAL TURNAROUND ON RURAL EDUCATION (26).

2/ Used interchangeably, the terms, nonmetro and rural, refer to areas not classified as an SMSA (Standard Statistical Metropolitan Area).

education to an urban model fostered attitudes and values among rural youths which encouraged migration away from rural areas "while discouraging the preservation and improvement of traditional rural schools and communities" (24: pp.41-42).

Too, rural communities had to cope with financial inequities arising from outmigration. Findings from one study in a Kentucky farming area showed that... "not only does the outmigration of young people represent a net 'human capital' outflow...but it also distorts the age structure so that persons in the productive age groups must pay for the services for more people than is true...in urban areas" (14: p.176).

Recent research shows that outmigration from nonmetro areas since 1970 continues to be selective of better educated youth (15) while metro migrants to nonmetro areas are younger, better educated, and higher paid than the metro nonmovers (35). However, relatively little is known about the effects of the migration turnaround on rural education and rural communities (27).

Purpose

This paper focuses on the impacts of rapid population growth 3/ on rural educational systems by comparing case study scenarios of two school districts experiencing rapid growth for different reasons and with different effects. A major objective is to consider issues and implications for new and/or modified policies and programs which will benefit rural education. Particular emphasis is given to Federal policy and practice. The belief here is that education is a vital and integral component of the development of rural America (21).

3/ The importance of studying the educational consequences of the turnaround for communities (both rural and urban) affected by drastic declines in enrollments is in no way minimized. Problems of declining enrollments are considered in Declining Enrollment: The Challenge of the Coming Decade (1).

THE RURAL TURNAROUND

Understanding the effects of the turnaround for rural education requires knowing where and why the turnaround is occurring and who is migrating.

Turnaround Charactertistics

Seventy-five percent of U.S. counties classified as nonmetro gained populations, 1970-1975. However, the growth for the large majority of gainers was less than 10 percent. Eighty counties increased 30 percent or more in population, and of these 25 counties had a 50 percent or greater gain. In many cases, growth was mainly due to net inmigration, although natural increase (changes in births and deaths) which also affects population change rates accounted solely for some increases such as several Southwestern counties, the sites of Indian reservations where birth rates were up.

Counties gaining over 20 percent or more in population are located in several general geographic areas of the country. The largest group of these counties is concentrated in several Southwestern states encompassing an area stretching northward through the intermountain region and including parts of Northeast Washington. Other areas are located in parts of Florida, Central Ozarks, Upper Great Lakes, Central Texas and a line of counties on the West Coast and along the California - Nevada border.

It is also important to be aware of the primary factors precipitating the turnaround and the characteristics of the in-migrants.

Causes

While the catalyst for the rural-to-urban migration patterns prior to 1970 was primarily economic, both economic and non-economic factors are accounting for the new migration stream (34). Some of the most rapid growth, particularly in parts of the West and Appalachia, stems from expansion

of extractive industry for energy sources including coal, gas, oil and other minerals (5). Another economic motivation for growth, especially in the South, is the decentralization of manufacturing with many companies establishing plants in small towns and rural areas. Expanding post-secondary educational and recreational developments are also generating growth in many areas throughout the country (3,5,31,34).

A strong non-economic basis also underlies the turnaround. Migration is occurring not because of economic necessity but to enhance the quality of life (23). This includes countless retirees moving to new non-traditional areas of retirement outside the Sunbelt, members of the back-to-the-earth movement moving for environmental reasons, and others moving because of preferences for the social amenities of life in small towns and rural places (10,12,23,28).

Characteristics of Migrants

Although a national tendency exists for new migrants to be younger, better educated, and of higher socioeconomic status than native populations (35), characteristics vary substantially by region, state and sub-state areas. Migrants moving into three areas of Arkansas -- Ozarks, Delta, and River Valley -- differed greatly in social and demographic characteristics and in their reasons for moving (31). In Southeastern Ohio, new migrants represented full ranges of age, education, income and occupation although the average socioeconomic level was higher than that of the native population (28). Migrant workers in an energy developing area of Wyoming were younger, married, better educated and earned higher incomes than the natives (22).

New urban migrants who may be younger, better educated, with different values, attitudes and orientations toward education often become advocates for change which may disrupt prevailing social organization (16). A prime

example is the case of the rural Oregon community where rapid influx of urban migrants (quickly participating in organizations and local comunity decision-making) resulted in a taxpayer revolt against funding for schools (18). In rural Maine, better educated in-migrants not only supported improvements in education but also tended to vie for community participation typically by running for school board membership. However, conflicts occurred between newcomers and long-time residents over educational issues such as required reading in literature and the establishment of family life courses (23). Conversely, when the migrants are primarily older retirees, effects for education may be of a different kind. Retired persons on fixed incomes are less prone to support bond issues and increased taxation for education (32).

Thus, the turnaround is a catalyst for rapid social change. Rapid population growth confronts rural communities and particularly rural educational systems with immediate problems of dealing with both large increases in students and with new ideas, expectations, values and behavior modes. One analyst studying the social impacts of nuclear energy plants writes: "the educational system can be one of the most severely impacted areas in communities experiencing rapid growth" (17).

With his theory of confrontation, Sociologist Alvin Bertrand (7,8) argues that rapid social change in communities and social institutions results in a period of disruption and disorganization characterized by situations involving both conflict and cooperation. However, the positive gains often are not immediately realized or recognized.

Case studies of school districts in two communities confronted by drastic, rapid population growth were conducted by U.S. Department of Agriculture

in cooperation with National Institute of Education. 4/ In late 1978, USDA researchers visited the selected study sites to conduct in-depth interviews with key officials and to obtain supplemental data from files, records, newspapers, and published sources.

EDUCATIONAL SCENARIOS IN TWO RAPID GROWTH COMMUNITIES

The following scenarios characterize the educational systems in two rapid growth rural communities. Reliance and Appaloosa, pseudonyms given to the "prototype" communities, were purposively chosen because they were believed to exemplify energy and social amenities growth, two of several different types of growth underlying the present metro-to-nonmetro migration turnaround.

Both communities are located in states west of the Mississippi. Since 1970, Reliance has experienced over a 50 percent increase in its county population (1 percent decline in 1960's), and county growth for Appaloosa has dramatically jumped by over 100 percent (2.6 percent increase in 1960's). Data (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1977) for 1970-1975 components of change indicate that approximately 90 percent of the growth in these communities was due to increased net migration, with the remainder due to natural increase (excess of births over deaths).

Based on data from the case studies, the scenarios portray (1) the general community setting, (2) the educational systems as impacted by rapid growth, (3) school-community relations, and (4) ways school districts and communities have coped with the impacts.

4/ Contractual agreement through Educational Resources Information Center, Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools, New Mexico State University.

Reliance

General Setting

Reliance is a relatively small community of Anglo Americans (92 percent) in the South Central region. The remaining eight percent are mainly Hispanic with a small number of Blacks. Its population is estimated to be 6,879 (1978) having increased 16 percent between 1970 and 1978. However, the population of the county containing Reliance grew 50 percent reaching a population of approximately 14,000 in 1978. The increase is of particular concern to the Reliance school system which is the larger of only two school districts in the county. Intensifying the concern is the awareness that many of the newcomers are retirees, who may prefer services other than education.

The economic base of Reliance reflects several major realities: it is a county seat community in a sparsely populated general area; it is a supply center mainly for ranchers who produce livestock on grasslands that receive an average of 30 inches of rainfall per year; and employment opportunities are scarce, being associated with a clothing firm (60 employees) and a feed mill (60 employees). A turkey processing plant, employing 190 people, was closed in 1976. Per capita income in 1974 was $3,182, up 38 percent from $2,301 in 1970. For a number of years, Reliance has also maintained economic ties with a large military installation in a neighboring county. Reportedly, over 500 persons commute 40 miles daily to civilian jobs at the base.

The base has also been a primary source of growth recently. More than 200 retirees in the Reliance area are ex-military. An even larger number of enlisted personnel and officers residing in the county have moved into trailer parks and new residential developments. Thus, a major cause of the growth is residential preferences for the Reliance area. The economy is not growing accordingly, however.

The social base seems to be centered in church and school groups. An absence of theatres and youth-oriented recreational facilities likely enhance participation by youths in the church and school-sponsored recreational activities which are available.

The political structure of Reliance includes three major elements. First, county government is comprised of a county judge and four county commissioners, each having their own precinct and equipment. Second, it has a part-time mayor, along with a five-member city council. Third, there is a seven-member school board elected by place and serving three-year terms. The school board, comprised mainly of ranchers before 1972, now includes a lawyer, highway patrolman, female newspaper reporter, contractor, bookkeeper, service station manager, and the wife of an attorney. There is also an active Chamber of Commerce and Industrial Development Foundation, whose members seek to attract firms.

Educational System

Reliance, larger by far of the two districts in the county, has one primary school with kindergarten through second grade, one elementary with grades 3 through 5, one middle school with grades 6 through 8, and one high school. Total school enrollment, excluding 100 kindergarten students, 5/ was 2,267 in 1978, up almost 40 percent from 1,626 in 1970. This increase has been accommodated without additional permanent structures.

Thus, a persistent major issue has been how to provide space for so many new students. This issue was temporarily resolved by renting the National Guard Armory in 1972 for a token annual fee, purchasing numerous

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5/ These students are educationally and/or economically disadvantaged. Other kindergarten-age children will be eligible for a part-year program beginning mid-season. Many attend private school.

portable classroom buildings, and using the auditorium and the library in the high school building as classrooms. The Armory houses the kindergarten students and other special education classes. The high school building, constructed in 1955, was designed to accommodate 400 students but has 750 students at present. This is possible through use of the auditorium, library and a portable building for classes.

Revenue to operate the school system is almost $3,100,000, 1978-79 school year. Of this amount, approximately $800,000 comes from the local level, $2,000,000 from the State, and $300,000 from the Federal Government. 6/ This is a per pupil expenditure of $1,378.

The appraised value of real estate in the school district containing Reliance is estimated to be $85 million. Starting in 1978, the assessed value for support of schools is 68 percent 7/ of the base of $85 million, or $58 million. For school support, this is taxed at a rate of $1.50 per $100. Appraisals have not been updated for several decades. Thus, tax inequities have supposedly developed, operating against newer homeowners, and favoring older homeowners and landowners.

School leaders increased the number of faculty members in 1978 to 142, up from 134 in 1976. The pupil/teacher ratio averages 25-30/1. Beginning salary level for teachers, for a ten month appointment, is $8,540 following

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6/ Reliance received aproximately $100,000 in Aid to Federally Impacted Areas under P.L. 874. Other monies are awarded under Title I, and Title I Migrant, Title IV.

7/ In the state containing Reliance, varying levels of assessment percentages and rates prevail depending upon function. Revenue for the county is currently based on a 20 percent assessment rate and a tax rate of $0.75 per $100. Revenue for the Reliance school district is based on a 25 percent assessment rate and a tax of $1.40 per $100.

the state pay scale. Officials reported that the school district could not afford to add a subsidy above the state scale.

School-Community Relations

From the perspective of the school administrators and teachers, persistent severe overcrowding has been the major problem. Students and staff experience daily frustrations of overcrowded science labs, libraries, dining rooms and hallways as well as use of space for unintended purposes.

There have been two major attempts in recent years to get approval of bond issues to build new school buildings in or near Reliance. The first of these attempts occurred in 1972. Approval for issuance of $2.5 million in bonds for a new high school building and other related improvements was rejected 4 to 1. The last attempt was in May, 1978. Voters rejected by 3 to 1 a proposal for a $5.15 million bond issue mainly for a new high school building and a new elementary school building to be located in a nearby community. The results were announced in the May 25th issue, "School District Voters Reject Bond Issue for New Facilities." Results indicated that in small outlying ranching communities, the ratios against the proposal were 6 to 1, 7 to 1, 8 to 1, 20 to 1, and 22 to 1. In Reliance, the vote was 1,599 against and 733 for (2 to 1).

Articles in the local newspaper indicate that at least one school board member openly opposed the bond issue on several grounds. Chances for passing another bond issue in the near future were in the words of one principal (and long-time resident) "probably zero."

Opposition to the school operations in another form was evident too. A citizen's group (many newcomers) had organized to express concern about county services and tax inequities. A parent-based move was underway to

transfer Reliance students living in one area of the county into the neighboring school district. If this happened the loss of the school district tax monies and the Federal Impact aid monies associated with these students would be serious.

Responses to Impacts

The initial, main impact of the turnaround on Reliance schools was severe overcrowding. Steps taken to counteract overcrowding (e.g. portable buildings and maximum utilization of space) provided immediate, although unsatisfactory, solutions. Attempts at more adequate long-range solutions through new school construction not only failed to gain voter approval but may have contributed to both dissatisfaction with schools from some groups and concerns with tax inequities and/or tax hikes among several groups. As an independent taxing unit, the school district arranged for a reassessment of property values. When asked how much the school district could expect to gain, one official noted that at least the issue of unfairness would be momentarily resolved.

To counteract organized parental attempts to transfer students to another school district, officials met with members and negotiated to keep the students in the Reliance district.

A positive outcome was the development of a pro-education group in the community backed by city leaders, professional and business groups, Chamber of Commerce, parents and other interested people.

Appaloosa

General Setting

Appaloosa originated from an 1868 mining camp (and others which followed) and flourished as a small industrial and trading center for a number of years. In 1970 the population was less than 12,000 in a county of 19,000.

However, economic development in the form of coal and mineral activity has brought a dramatic influx of population increasing the town size by nearly 150 percent to an estimated 1978 population of 29,000. County population in 1978 is estimated to be 42,800, a growth of 132 percent.

Today, Appaloosa is a virtual boomtown. The inmigrant workforce for four coal-generated power plants and other underground mineral mines plus all the associated service infrastructure resulted in initial severe strains on housing, utilities and essential service sectors (including schools). Mobile home parks have replaced the tent camps, where many of the early wave of construction workers were forced to live. Over 80 percent of students at one elementary school live in such parks.

There are indications that capacities of the new sewage and utilities facilities built to accommodate the boom have already been exceeded. The just completed hospital was already too small according to standard criteria. In the older sections of the community, the pattern of streets is so vaguely defined that mail delivery is difficult because Appaloosa oldtimers refer to the locations of their houses as close to old number 7 or number 11 (former mining camps). The result is a series of narrow winding streets, choked with traffic at times and meandering through an urban sprawl of dwellings and businesses. However, streets in the new sections are more adequate.

The economy is also booming. The county tax base has grown to a healthy $550 million. Over 75 percent of tax revenue comes from taxation on the industrial installations. Estimated per capita income as of 1974 was $5,358 compared to $2,938 in 1970.

The boom in Appaloosa has impacted the social life of the community. The quiet and slow pace of life centered around social activities in churches, schools and traditional groups has been drastically altered. The boom

has brought "an entertainment strip" to Appaloosa, a short street of clubs and bars plus reports of drastic rises in crime and vice.

The traditional leadership structure consisting of a part-time mayor and city council has come under local and even national scrutiny concerning their ability to handle the reported vice and crime coming into Appaloosa. The result has been major upheaval in leadership with active campaigns to replace the existing leaders. The seven member school board appears to have maintained its stability and escaped major alterations through the boom. Its membership includes at least one newcomer (wife of power plant official) and represents business as well as professional elements of the community.

Educational System

Like Reliance, Appaloosa is the center for one of two school districts in the county. Appaloosa Independent School District includes four schools outside of Appaloosa: two K-6 schools located 7 miles and 25 miles away respectively, one K-8 school in a small community 60 miles away, and a K-12 school serving two hamlets 40 miles away. Eight elementary schools, two junior high schools and one high school are located in Appaloosa. Officials report long-range plans for another high school and three elementary schools before 1990.

The effects of the boom on total school enrollment are dramatic, resulting in serious overcrowding and shortage of teachers. The number of students has jumped from 3,100 in 1970 to a present high of 5,200, a 68 percent increase. The number crunch was felt most keenly during 1972-73 when enrollment swelled by 500 students in a single year. To respond to the problem, school officials were forced to operate double-shifts at the junior high school and to bus students to reactivated classrooms at outlying

schools. Hastily acquired portable buildings were also utilized until a school construction program could be undertaken.

Revenues for operating the school system total approximately $15 million (incuding a $1.9 million carry over) for the 1978-79 school year. The major source of revenue is local ($12.4 million) with $503,000 from the state, 8/ and $160,000 from the Federal government, under P.L. 874. This is a per pupil expenditure of $2,238.

Local and county taxes in 1978 for schools are applied as follows: county taxation on a base of $550 million at the rate of 12 mills, (or $1.20 per $100) which is proportionately distributed between the two school districts. Property tax base of $371 million in the school district is also taxed at the rate of 25 mills, or $2.50 per $100. These bases yield $4 million and $8.4 million respectively for total local revenue of $12.4 million. Approximately 75 percent comes from industry and the remaining 25 percent from real estate.

Local sources of revenue are too high for Appaloosa school district to be eligible for funds from the state educational foundation. A small amount of revenue comes from state land income funds, which are Federal mineral royalties paid to the state and distributed to local school districts. Legislation to change old methods of distributing funds on the basis of a population census is pending. Appaloosa officials fear that a [illegible]t amendment to the bill calling for "equitable" distribution of the royalties could be interpreted in a way which might have adverse effects for wealthy districts. The school board had officially opposed the bill.

8/ The local revenue amount is based on a 91 percent collection rate. State funds are from the state land income fund (Federal mineral royalties paid to the state and distributed to the local school districts). Appaloosa's local tax revenues are too high for them to qualify for other state aid.

Voters approved total bonds of $11 million for school construction and other improvements in 1973 and 1974. In addition, school districts were given permission through special voter referendum to accumulate $1 million per year of surplus revenue for five years for capital improvements. As a result, one junior high school and two elementary schools had been constructed with a third projected for completion in 1979. Approved capital expenditures also provided for other renovations and improvements of existing structures.

A healthy economic status enabled the school district to hire more and better qualified teachers. In 1978-79, salary for a beginning teacher was $11,100 plus retirement, and life and health insurance benefits. In addition to special education teachers, the present staff provides a comprehensive range of supportive services: counselors, psychologist, speech therapist, occupational therapist, nurses, music teachers, social workers and others.

The boom brought about a rise in social problems among the student body which officials felt were attributable to conditions associated with the growth. Among these were increased truancy, rise in dropouts, increase in alcoholism and drug use among students, and a host of family-related problems including a dramatic rise in child abuse. The rate of student turnover (average of 50 per month) created a paperwork overload for administrative personnel. Students were frequently in-and-out of schools several times. For example, one student changed schools 13 times during the year. Many high schoolers dropped out before graduation for high wages ($8-9 per hour) working in the mines or power plants.

School-Community Relations

Voter support for school construction is one example of the good relationships between school and community. The school district reciprocates by making its facilities available to the community for recreation, civic, and public affairs. School officials reported that the school-city-county relationships are mutally beneficial.

A state community college located in Appaloosa plays an important role in enhancing school-community relations as well as the broader aspects of development. The program at the college offers post-secondary credit and noncredit education for all age ranges. Wives of industrial workers take academic or special interest courses with free child-care available to them while Appaloosa high school students take selected courses for joint high school/college credit free-of-charge. These opportunities for continuing education may be a factor in developing a pro-education attitude among Appaloosans.

Responses to Impacts

School officials were faced with a multitude of direct and indirect impacts on schools from rapid growth. Having a strong local financial base, stimulated by the economic boom, provided resources to tackle many of the problems.

With a lag of one to two years, the school officials initiated a building program to at least keep up with the growth. Their rising budget also facilitated development of an adequate and specialized staff to deal, in part, with some of the social problems.

To counteract the problem of a high rate of dropouts, an alternative school was established (new policies and practices were instituted at the high school).

At the elementary level, the general philosophy that "small is good" kept size of elementary schools under 350. Some schools offered "Parent Effectiveness Training" (P.E.T.) for parents. Overall, a progressive and innovative response to the direct impacts was observed, although the responses did not necessarily reflect a comprehensive long-range plan for the future.

Officials also had to deal with indirect impacts stemming from situations in other sectors of the community. For example, the housing shortage hampered recruitment of teachers. So the school district paid rent on apartments over the summer months to guarantee a place for incoming teachers to live.

Contrasts

Appaloosa and Reliance are two communities confronted with the strains of rapid social change from drastic shifts in population. The process of adaptation is different in each case, with the adaptative capacity influenced by economic and social factors operating in the larger community arena.

Adaptation in Reliance, the community lacking economic growth commensurate with population growth, appears to be weighted more strongly with elements of conflict than cooperation, at least in the short-range. The educational system had been severely impacted by an increase in students far exceeding the physical and staff capacity of the schools, and attempts to find solutions to the problems were generally unsuccessful. Possible long-range gains may be realized through citizen groups contributing to a new and perhaps stronger base of local leadership. For such a leadership to unite in favor of improved schools could benefit the educational sytem. Also, as carriers of diverse attitudes, values, and behavioral and cultural traits, the newcomers open the doors for greater social pluralism in the community.

The balance in Appaloosa, on the other hand, appears to have tilted toward the positive aspects of change. The stronger economic base has facilitated the creation of improved facilities and a stronger school program with more qualified faculty and supportive staff. Growth had brought a rise in social problems 9/ but also a more cosmopolitan outlook among Appaloosa students as they were exposed to new ideas and behaviors. An unanticipated long-range consequence of the turnaround for Appaloosa may be the strains on a fragile and limited natural environment. Water is a scarce resource in Appaloosa's county, and the river supplying water to the region was subject to detrimental effects of overload and industrial abuse.

The initial impact of the turnaround on the educational system was student overload. However, the growing economy in Appaloosa coupled with good school-community relations enabled the officials to handle the overcrowding problem more rapidly and effectively than Reliance. The unwillingness of the Reliance voters to bear increased taxation for schools led to unsatisfactory stop-gap solutions to overcrowding, creating greater dissatisfaction and negative attitudes among community members--a vicious cycle set-in-motion.

While Reliance continues to be faced with severe overcrowding problems, it has not been impacted by noticeable changes in social problems among students. This may be attributed to the sheer magnitude and breadth of growth in Appaloosa where impacts of growth extend far past schools into all functional areas, public and private, of the community.

9/ Social problems of this nature including classroom discipline, increased drug and alcohol use, higher incidences of vandalism, truancy, unmarried pregnancies, child abuse, and broken homes are associated with a general rapid growth malady called the "Gillette Syndrome" (11,19).

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

The scenarios demonstrate that, in both communities, the educational impacts of the turnaround were strongly influenced by the particular economic and social conditions operating in the larger community arena. In Appaloosa, the rapidly growing economy and increased local tax base were major factors in the eventual launching of a successful program of school construction and capital improvements to combat severe over crowding. Continued unwillingness of Reliance voters to bear increased taxation for schools necessitated unsatisfactory stop-gap solutions leading to greater dissatisfaction and negative attitudes toward the schools. Furthermore, an underestimation and underresponse to the problems of rapid growth were very evident. In Appaloosa, construction of the proposed new high school was not started; the new sewage plant nearing completion was already outmoded even for the present population, and the recently completed hospital was too small. School officials in Reliance responded to severe overcrowding with momentary, stop-gap solutions, and community and county officials were taking no apparent steps to avoid a multitude of potential problems stemming from growing unrest among newcomers.

The major implication is that substantial economic and social costs affecting education can be avoided if planning for expected growth occurs early and involves a long-range perspective. Thus, data and technical assistance for adequate planning are major needs of rapid growth areas. A second implication suggested by the scenarios is the need for assistance to cope with the most obvious and likely educational impact of sudden drastic population growth: overcrowding.

Several possible policy initiatives could minimize the costs and maximize the benefits of rapid population growth. These include actions at local, State and Federal levels. In keeping with the stated focus of this

paper, suggestions for Federal policy initiatives are mentioned here. No endorsement of any agency or group has been sought. The suggestions are offered as examples of the kinds of Federal policy initiatives which might provide appropriate solutions to some of the educational problems arising from rapid growth. Federal assistance could be in the form of carefully targeted:

1. Loans or grants for school construction or other capital improvements. The possibility to apply for and secure loans quickly could enable some communities to respond to growth needs before the time-lag when the tax base may increase from new sources of revenue. In situations where growth is not accompanied by increased local monies, grants and/or interest-free loans could provide for the construction of schools and improvement of school facilities.
2. Loans or grants for general planning. Grants for planning could facilitate more accurate estimates of population growth and formation of alternatives to cope with such growth. They could also help reduce the incidence of expensive retrofitting of public facilities.
3. Technical assistance to rapid growth communities and school districts. The assistance could be developed along the lines of the Extension Service but with greatly expanded services and capabilities (20). Unanticipated problems of rapid growth can be overwhelming to school officials and community leaders. Advice from technical assistants could put educators in touch with resources and skills to cope with the problems and to maximize the gains of rapid growth.
4. Incentives to stimulate the development of innovative, nontraditional programs at community colleges located in rural areas. Community colleges can play an important role as a vehicle for rural development by expanding programs and curricula to serve the educational needs

of many diverse groups. Examples are: adult education offerings to serve many segments (young and old) of the community possibly developing more positive attitudes and orientations toward education, specialized courses 10/ to meet the skills and training requirements of local businesses and industries thereby encouraging the economic development and furthering in-migration of an area.

Ultimately, effective policy and programming for rural education requires coordinated action at local, State, and Federal levels. The key is to discern which aspects of change brought about by "The Great Population Turnaround" are fixed and inalterable (33), and which aspects can be controlled through new and modified policies and programs.

10/ The community college in Appaloosa offered specialized courses to miners including required training in mine safety as well as laboratory services to various industries.

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